MARVEL COMICS

THE EVERYMAN AVENGER

# THUNDERSTRIKE

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## BLOODAXE: UNMASKED!

WHEN ARCHITECT ERIC MASTERSON STAMPS HIS WOODEN WALKING STICK UPON THE GROUND, IT IS TRANSFORMED INTO A MYSTICAL WEAPON CALLED THUNDERSTRIKE! ARMED WITH INCREDIBLE POWERS, MASTERSON WORKS TO PROVE THAT ONE MAN MUST MAKE A DIFFERENCE, BECAUSE THIS WORLD STILL NEEDS HEROES! STAN LEE PRESENTS ...

# THUNDERSTRIKE!

TOM DeFALCO & RON FRENZ • AL MILGROM • JANICE CHIANG • CHRIS DeFELIPPO • RALPH MACCHIO • MARK GRUENWALD
SCRIPT, PLOT & PENCILS — FINISHED ART — LETTERER — COLORIST — EDITOR — EDITOR IN CHIEF

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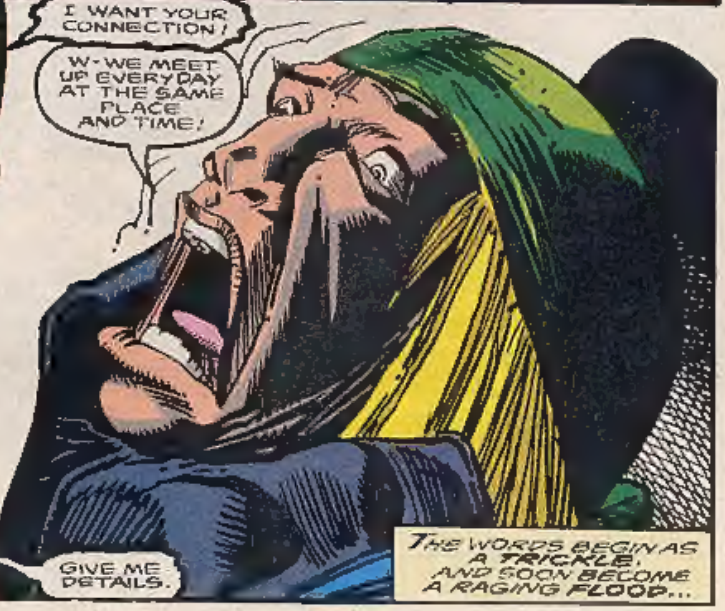
WHERE IS SETH?!
I REALIZE THAT YOU CLOWNS ARE PRETTY LOW ON HIS TOTEM POLE.
YOU'RE ONLY INSIGNIFICANT TRAFFICKERS IN DRUGS AND GUNS!
BUT YOU CAN STILL SUPPLY ME WITH THE INFORMATION I SEEK!

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, YOU ARE FACING A KINDER, GENTLER BLOODAXE!
MY ASSOCIATE -- THUNDERSTRIKE -- RECENTLY CONVINCED ME TO END MY MURDEROUS WAYS! I SINCERELY CAME HERE WITH THE INTENTION OF SPARING YOUR LIVES!

PLEASE DON'T FORCE ME TO RECONSIDER MY POSITION!
HOW DOES SETH CONTACT YOU?
W-WE CAN'T RAT OUT THE SNAKE MAN!
HE'LL KILL US!

TRUE...BUT ONLY IF HE FINDS YOU!
MY HANDS ALREADY EMBRACE YOUR SPINDLY LITTLE NECK!


I WANT YOUR CONNECTION!
W-WE MEET UP EVERY DAY AT THE SAME PLACE AND TIME!
GIVE ME DETAILS.
THE WORDS BEGIN AS A TRICKLE, AND SOON BECOME A RAGING FLOOD...

EVENTUALLY, HAVING HEARD ENOUGH, BLOODAXE ALLOWS THE CRINGING GANG-BANGER TO DROP TO THE FLOOR.

D-DON'T KILL ME, MAN!

P-PLEASE DON'T KILL ME!

A WICKED GLEAM FILLS IN THE EYES OF THE EXECUTIONER--

AND THEN--

--THE ENCHANTED WEAPON OF BLOODAXE SUDDENLY BENDS PHYSICAL SPACE--

--AND INSTANTLY TELEPORTS ITS GRIM-VISAGED MASTER TO A MOST FAMILIAR LOCKER ROOM!

SETH CLAIMS TO BE A REINCARNATION OF THE EGYPTIAN SERPENT-GOD OF DEATH!

HIS STORY MAY SOUND A LITTLE WONKY...

BUT, CONSIDERING THE WAY MAGIC HAS AFFECTED MY LIFE, I SHOULDN'T TALK!

THE GUY'S DEFINITELY A SERIAL KILLER OF EPIC PROPORTIONS--I KNOW THAT MUCH FOR SURE--AND HE POSSESSES INCREDIBLE, ALMOST UNLIMITED POWER.

HE CERTAINLY WOULD HAVE DESTROYED ME... IF MASTERSON HADN'T INTERVENED!

MASTERSON! I USED TO BELIEVE HIS CONSCIENCE AND COMPASSION MADE HIM...

WEAK AND INEFFECTUAL!

BUT I HAVE RECENTLY BEEN FORCED TO REEVALUATE OUR RELATIONSHIP!

THOUGH OUR METHODS DIFFER SIGNIFICANTLY, AND HAVE OFTEN CAST US AGAINST EACH OTHER... HIS UNWAVERING DEDICATION TO JUSTICE IS NO LESS THAN MY OWN!

EXIT

I BELIEVE THE TIME MAY HAVE FINALLY COME FOR US TO SET ASIDE OUR PETTY DIFFERENCES--

--AND ARRIVED AT A SEPARATE PEACE!

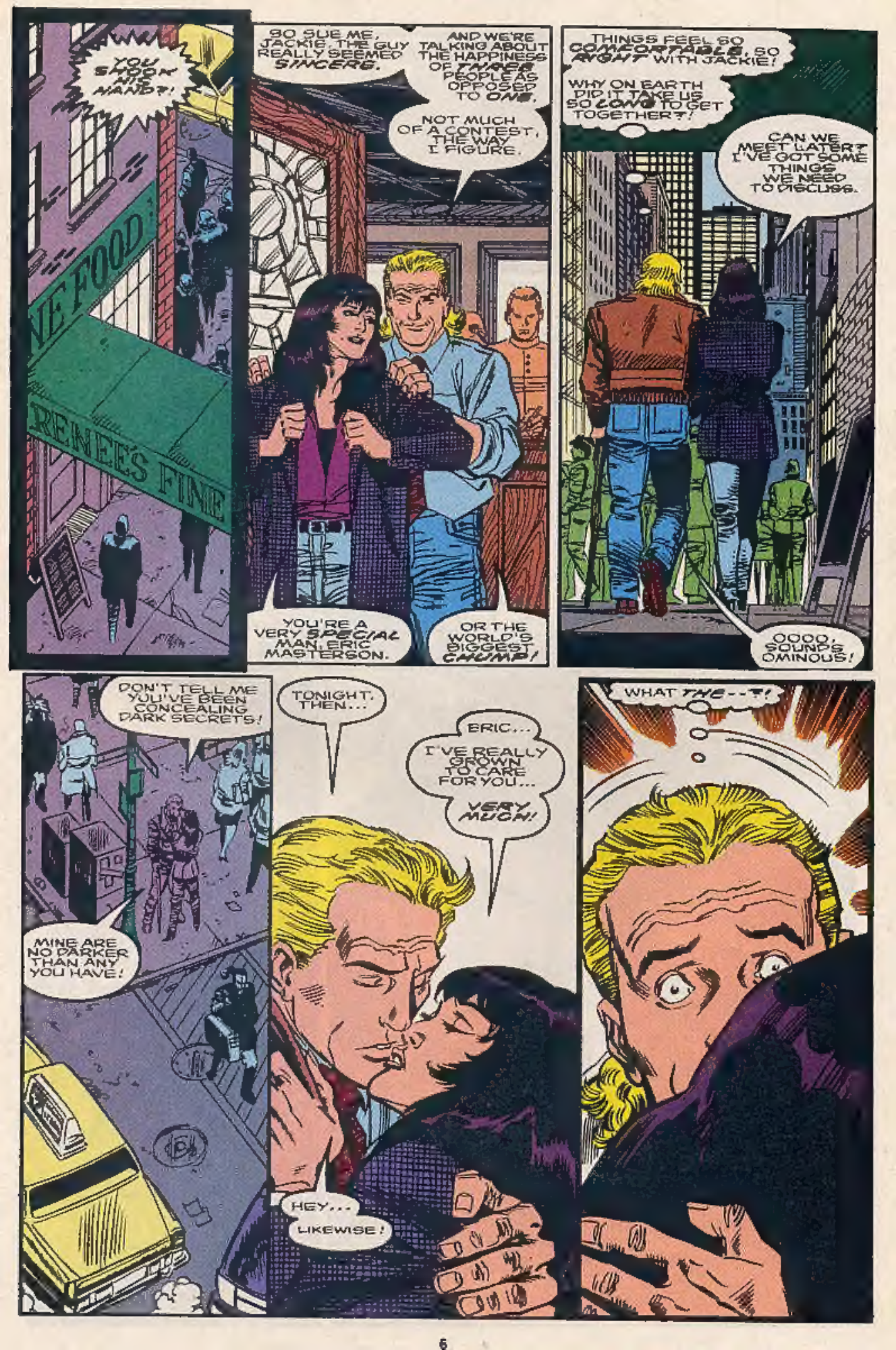
MEANWHILE, SOMEWHERE ACROSS TOWN...
C'MON, ERIC...
STOP MOGGING THE BATHROOM!
YOU DO MOST OF YOUR WORK AT HOME, REMEMBER? I'M THE ONE WHO REPORTS TO AN OFFICE!
HEY! CAN YOU HEAR ME--
--OR DID YOU DIE IN THERE?!
NOPE, I'M STILL ALIVE...
BUT, NOT FOR LONG... IF SETH IS TO BE BELIEVED!
I STILL DON'T KNOW HOW OLD FROGFACE MANAGED TO TATTOO THIS STUPID MARK OF DEATH ON MY CHEST, BUT I CAN'T SEEM TO GET RID OF IT!
SORRY, SAM! I DIDN'T MEAN TO HOLD YOU UP THIS MORNING!
WHAT'S THIS ERIC MASTERSON IN A TIE AND WEARING AFTERSHAVE?!
HUBBA! HUBBA!
CAN IT BE THAT THE YOUNG MAN HAS A BREAKFAST DATE?
OH, THAT JACKIE LUKUS IS A LUCKY GIRL!
PERHAPS, BUT I'M NOT MEETING HER...
MY APPOINTMENT HAPPENS TO BE WITH A CERTAIN HARD-BODIED BRUNETTE--
--WHO GOES BY THE NAME OF BOBBY STEELE!
THE MAN WHO'S ABOUT TO MOVE MY EX-WIFE AND SON TO THE WEST COAST!
OUCH!

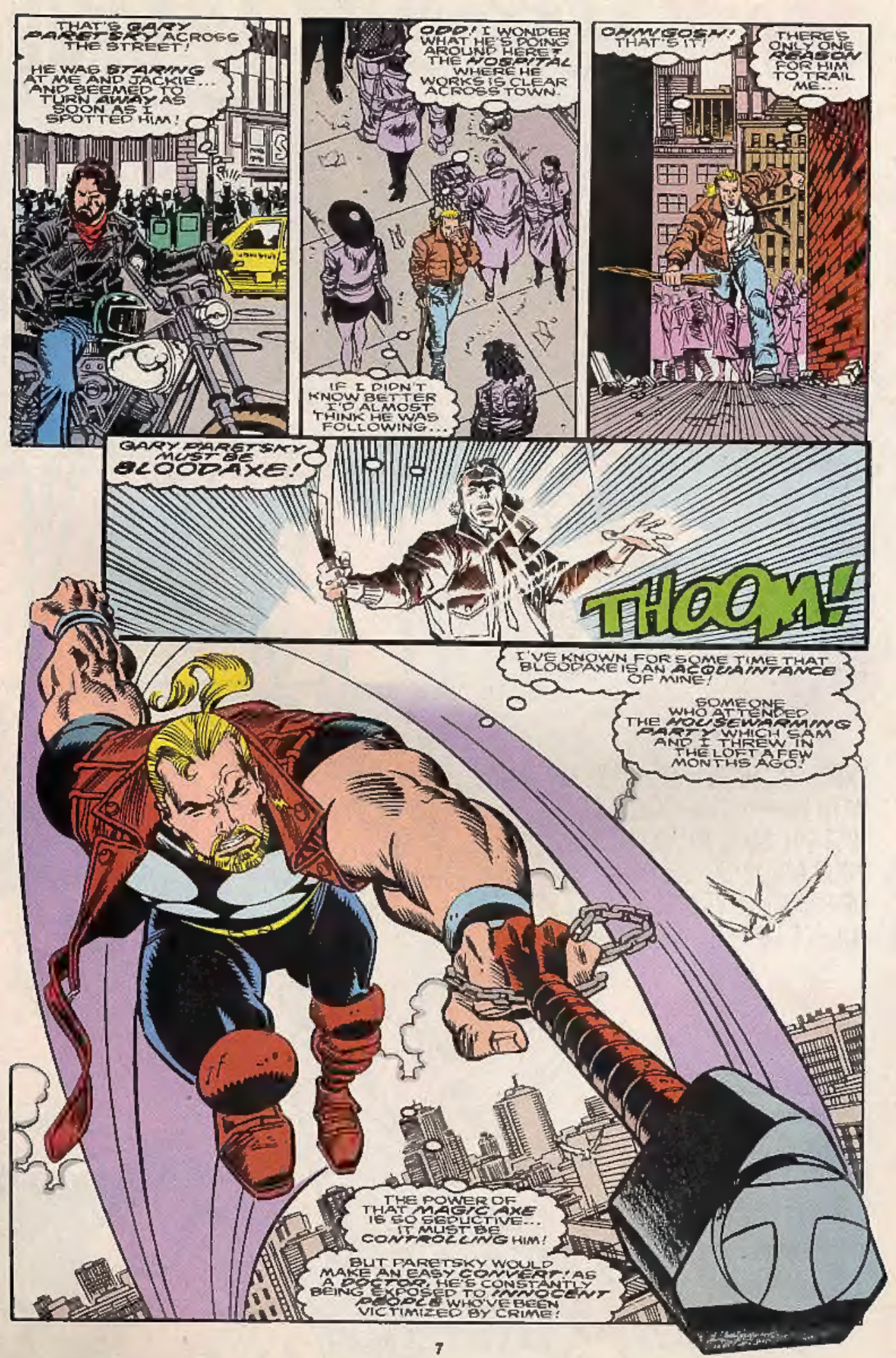
AEL W. BRENZIE STADIUM
THANKS FOR AGREEING TO MEET ME, MASTERSON.

I WAS SURPRISED TO HEAR FROM YOU, STEELE.
I THOUGHT YOU'D BE PACKING FOR YOUR EVENING FLIGHT TO CALIFORNIA.
MARCY'S HANDLING EVERYTHING ON THE HOME FRONT.
I JUST HAD TO CLEAN OUT MY LOCKER.
LOOK, MAN, YOU HAVE EVERY REASON TO RESENT ME. LORD KNOWS I NEVER CUT YOU ANY SLACK--
--AND I CAN ONLY IMAGINE HOW THIS MOVE IS TEARING YOU UP INSIDE!
BUT I JUST COULDN'T LEAVE WITHOUT ASSURING YOU THAT I'LL TAKE GOOD CARE OF KEVIN AND MARCY!

MY LIFE HAS BEEN IN A TAILSPIN THE PAST FEW MONTHS, BUT I'VE LEARNED SOMETHING BY BOTTOMING OUT...
EVERYBODY DESERVES ANOTHER SHOT.
I'M NOT GOING TO INSULT YOUR INTELLIGENCE BY ASKING FOR YOUR BLESSING OR ANY BULL LIKE THAT...

BUT I WILL OFFER YOU A SHOT... AT ME!
TAKE IT, MASTERSON! I DESERVE IT AFTER THE WAY I'VE TREATED YOU.
TRUST ME... WE'LL BOTH FEEL A LOT BETTER!


YOU SHOOK HIS HAND?!
NE FOOD
RENEE'S FINE
SO SUE ME, JACKIE. THE GUY REALLY SEEMED SINCERE.
AND WE'RE TALKING ABOUT THE HAPPINESS OF TWO PEOPLE AS OPPOSED TO ONE.
NOT MUCH OF A CONTEST, THE WAY I FIGURE.
YOU'RE A VERY SPECIAL MAN, ERIC MASTERSON.
OR THE WORLD'S BIGGEST CHUMP!
THINGS FEEL SO COMFORTABLE, SO RIGHT WITH JACKIE!
WHY ON EARTH DID IT TAKE US SO LONG TO GET TOGETHER?!
CAN WE MEET LATER? I'VE GOT SOME THINGS WE NEED TO DISCUSS.
OOOO, SOUNDS OMINOUS!
DON'T TELL ME YOU'VE BEEN CONCEALING DARK SECRETS!
MINE ARE NO DARKER THAN ANY YOU HAVE!
TONIGHT, THEN...
ERIC...
I'VE REALLY GROWN TO CARE FOR YOU...
VERY MUCH!
HEY...
LIKEWISE!
WHAT THE--?!


THAT'S GARY PARETSKY ACROSS THE STREET!
HE WAS STARING AT ME AND JACKIE... AND SEEMED TO TURN AWAY AS SOON AS I SPOTTED HIM!
ODD! I WONDER WHAT HE'S DOING AROUND HERE? THE HOSPITAL WHERE HE WORKS IS CLEAR ACROSS TOWN.
IF I DIDN'T KNOW BETTER I'D ALMOST THINK HE WAS FOLLOWING...
OMMIGOSH! THAT'S IT!
THERE'S ONLY ONE REASON FOR HIM TO TRAIL ME...
GARY PARETSKY MUST BE BLOODAXE!
THOOM!
I'VE KNOWN FOR SOME TIME THAT BLOODAXE IS AN ACQUAINTANCE OF MINE!
SOMEONE WHO ATTENDED THE HOUSEWARMING PARTY WHICH SAM AND I THREW IN THE LOFT A FEW MONTHS AGO!
THE POWER OF THAT MAGIC AXE IS SO SEDUCTIVE... IT MUST BE CONTROLLING HIM!
BUT PARETSKY WOULD MAKE AN EASY CONVERT! AS A DOCTOR, HE'S CONSTANTLY BEING EXPOSED TO INNOCENT PEOPLE WHO'VE BEEN VICTIMIZED BY CRIME!

SO MUCH NEEDLESS SUFFERING WOULD BE A MOUNTING SOURCE OF FRUSTRATION TO A DEDICATED HEALER--

--AND IT WOULD CERTAINLY EXPLAIN BLOODAXE'S OBSESSION WITH PUNISHING CRIMINALS!

UH-OH! HE'S SLOWING DOWN, AND SEEMS TO BE LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO PARK! I'D BETTER DUCK OUT OF SIGHT ON THE NEAREST ROOFTOP!

BLOODAXE IS THE MOST BRUTAL AND VICIOUS VIGILANTE I'VE HAD THE MISFORTUNE TO RUN ACROSS--

--BUT I CAN'T REALLY HOLD HIM RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS ACTIONS!

I'VE HELD THAT ENCHANTED AXE! I KNOW HOW IT TRIED TO INFLUENCE MY MIND, AND MUST BE MANIPULATING HIS!

S' FUNNY, I ONCE HARBORED A FANTASY THAT BLOODAXE WAS SECRETLY BOBBY STEELE!

I CAN BE SUCH A JERK AT TIMES AND--HEY!

SUSAN AUSTIN IS STEPPING OUT OF THAT CAB--

--AND SHE APPEARS TO BE FOCUSED ON PARETSKY!

I DON'T GET IT! SUSAN IS STANDING BESIDE THAT CAB... AND PEERING OVER IT'S ROOF...ALMOST AS IF SHE WAS TRYING TO HIDE HERSELF FROM GARY'S VIEW!

I KNOW THEY'VE DATED RECENTLY BUT--WHOA! PARETSKY JUST ENTERED ONE OF MARCY'S HEALTH CLUBS, AND I JUST CAUGHT SIGHT OF ANOTHER FAMILIAR FACE!

IT'S ED MARRERO, AND I COULD ALMOST SWEAR HE'S GOT HIS EYES ON SUSAN!

PARETSKY! MARRERO! SUSAN! WHAT THE BLAZES IS HAPPENING HERE? WHO IS TRAILING WHOM?

JOHN STEELE

MAYBE I JUMPED TO THE WRONG CONCLUSION ABOUT GARY! THIS COULD ALL BE PERFECTLY INNOCENT...

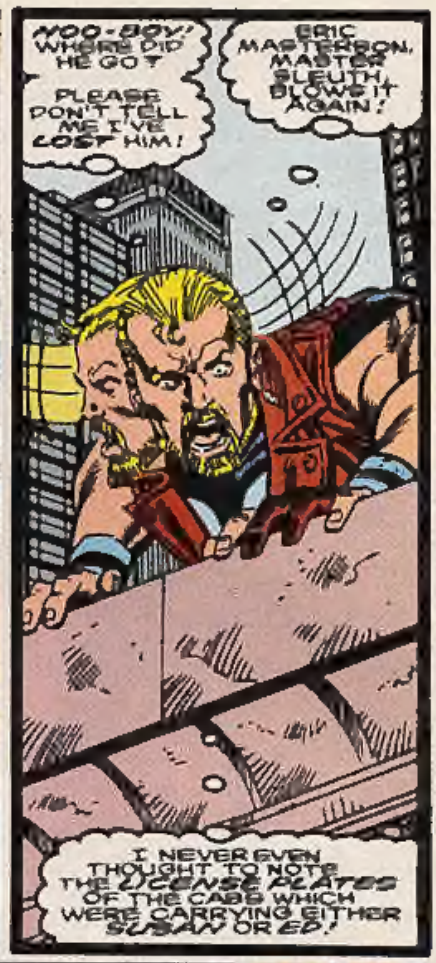
YEAH, JUST LIKE I COULD BE THE GREATEST AVENGER SINCE CAPTAIN AMERICA!

WHOOPS! I WAS SO DISTRACTED...I ALMOST DIDN'T NOTICE PARETSKY EXITING SALON STEELE!

VROOM VROOM

HE'S ON THE MOVE AGAIN!
SWELL! THIS COULD BE A TOTAL WASTE OF MY TIME, HAVING ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO DO WITH BLOODAXE!
BUT, SOMETHING TELLS ME TO STICK WITH PARETSKY!

OH, NO! HE TURNED DOWN THAT BLOCK WITHOUT SIGNALING!
I'M OVERSHOOTING HIM!
I REALLY HATE WHEN THIS HAPPENS!
I'LL HAVE TO LAND SOMEWHERE UP AHEAD, AND TOSS MY MACE BACK IN THIS DIRECTION!


WOO-BOY! WHERE DID HE GO?
PLEASE DON'T TELL ME I'VE LOST HIM!
ERIC MASTERSON, MASTER SLEUTH, BLOWS IT AGAIN!
I NEVER EVEN THOUGHT TO NOTE THE LICENSE PLATES OF THE CABS WHICH WERE CARRYING EITHER SUSAN OR ED!

YO, JERRY! REMEMBER THOSE TWO CREEPS THAT SECURITY RAN OFF YESTERDAY? THEY'RE BACK AT THE SOUTH ENTRANCE!
WANT ME TO ALERT THE GUARDS?
NAW! THERE'S NO NEED TO BOTHER HIM! I'LL HANDLE IT!

EXCUSE ME, PEOPLE! THIS STREET IS CLOSED TO PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC FOR A REASON!
WE'RE GOING TO BE BLASTING TODAY!
WARNING!
IT ISN'T SAFE TO HANG AROUND HERE!

INDEED! IT IS NOT SAFE LITTLE MAN ...FOR YOU!

MONGOOSE, YOU FOOL!

WE WERE SENT HERE TO DO THE MASTER'S WORK! YOUR STUPID TEMPER HAS RUINED EVERYTHING!

BE SILENT, QUICKSAND! WE WILL ESTABLISH ANOTHER RENDEZVOUS POINT... AFTER I HAVE DEALT WITH THIS ARROGANT INSECT!

MY GOD-- I RECOGNIZE YOU TWO! I'VE SEEN YOU BOTH IN ACTION AGAINST THE MIGHTY THOR!

YOU'RE PRACTICALLY HEADLINERS ON AMERICA'S MOST WANTED!

LOOKS LIKE I ARRIVED JUST IN TIME! MY INFORMATION WAS CORRECT!

SETH'S AGENTS SCORE HIGH MARKS IN PUNCTUALITY--

--BUT THEY DEFINITELY NEED A REFRESHER COURSE IN SUBTLETY!

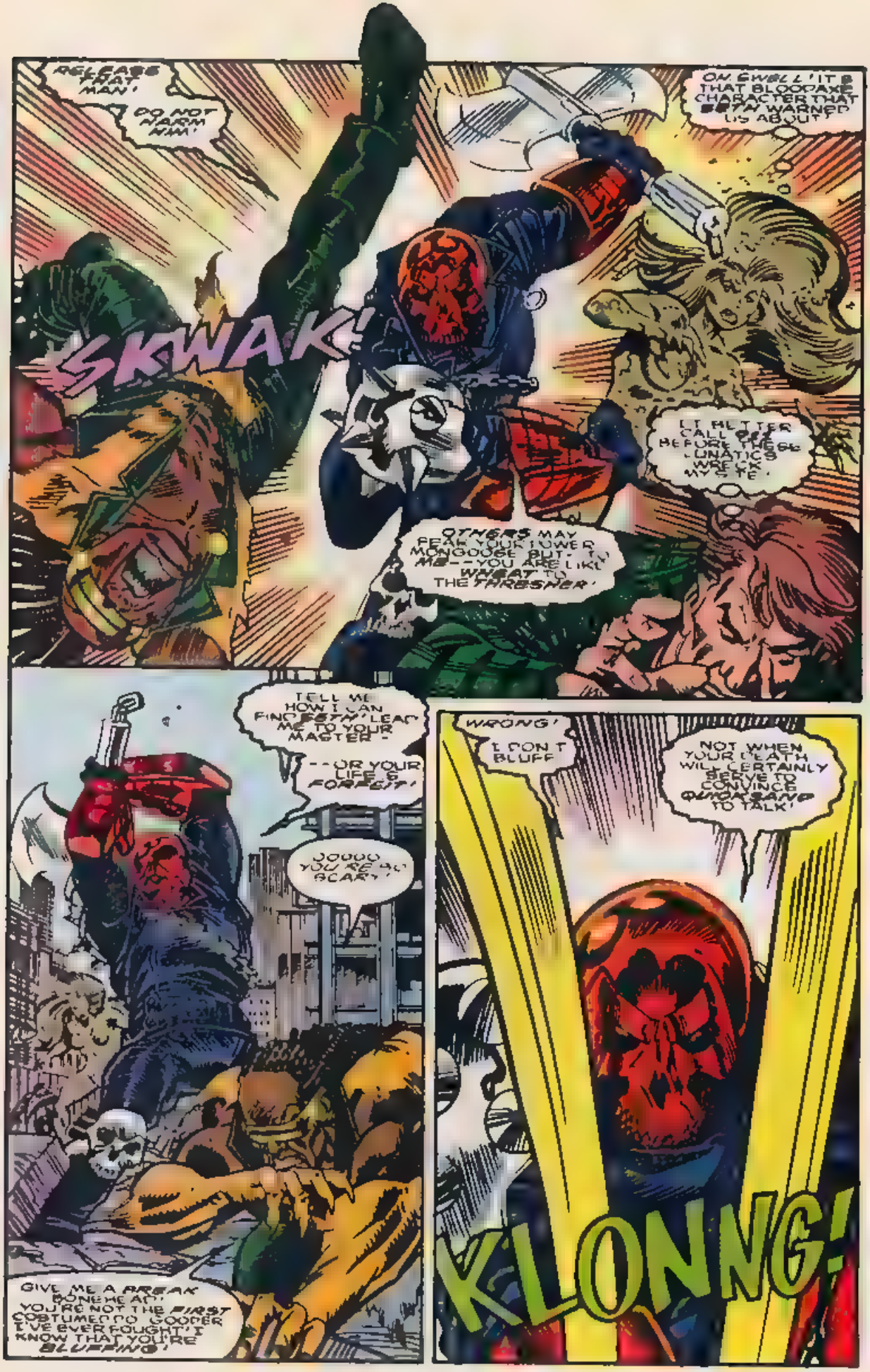
MONGOOSE AND QUICKSAND DON'T REALIZE THAT THEY'RE THREATENING AN ACQUAINTANCE OF MINE!

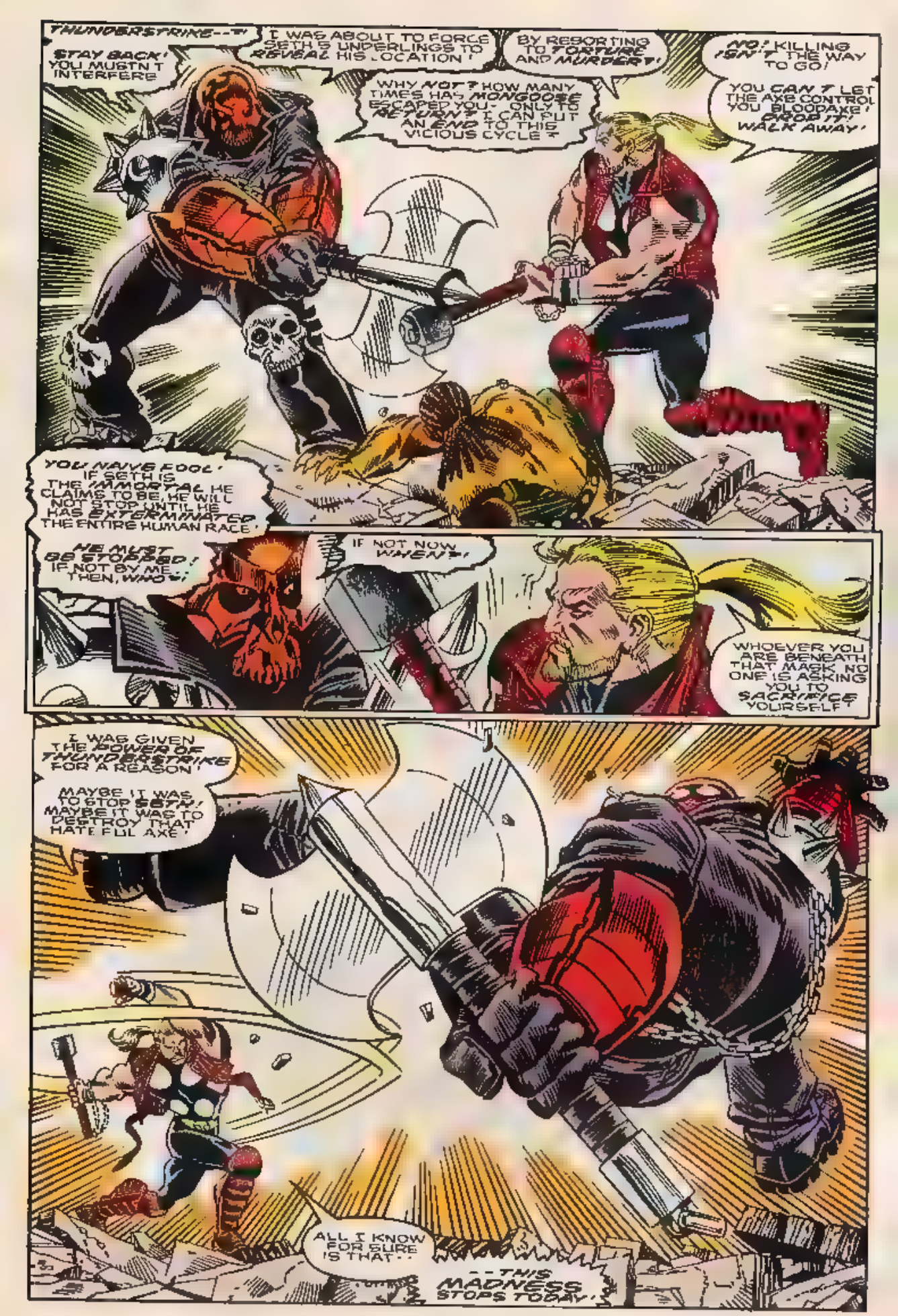
I KNOW JERRY SAPRISTI!

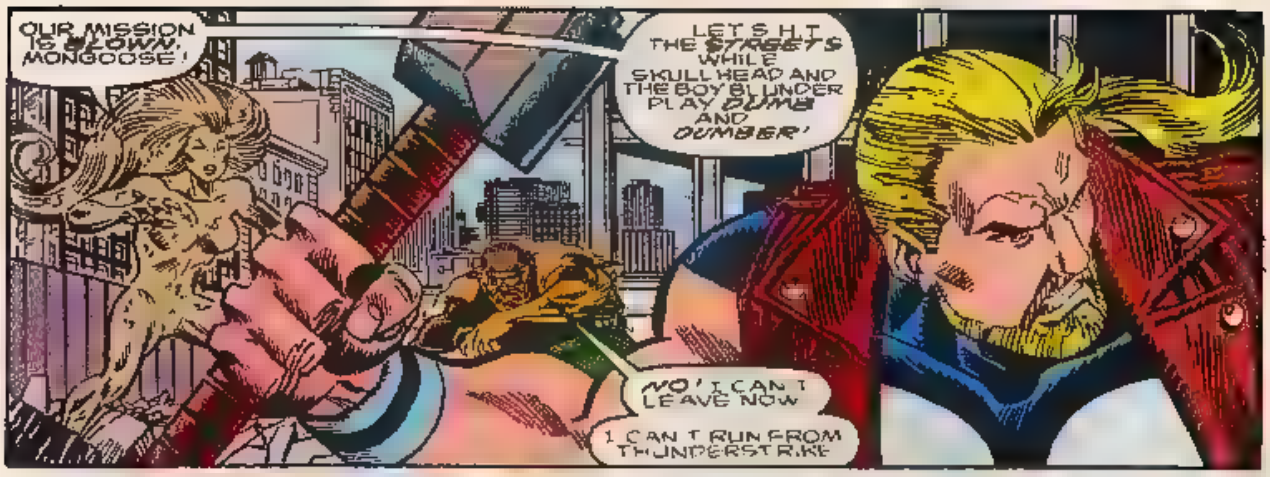
TALK ABOUT COINCIDENCE! I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM SINCE MASTERSON'S HOUSEWARMING PARTY!

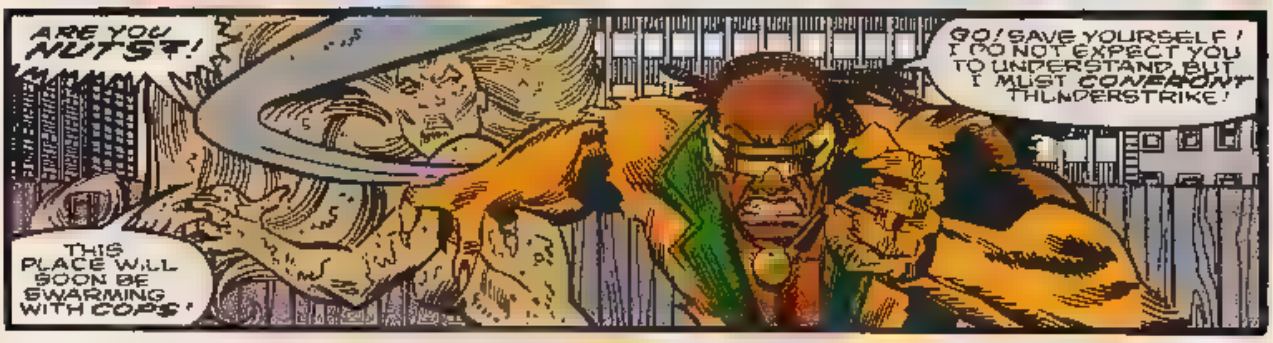
THAT WAS THE NIGHT I LEARNED THAT ERIC WAS THUNDERSTRIKE--

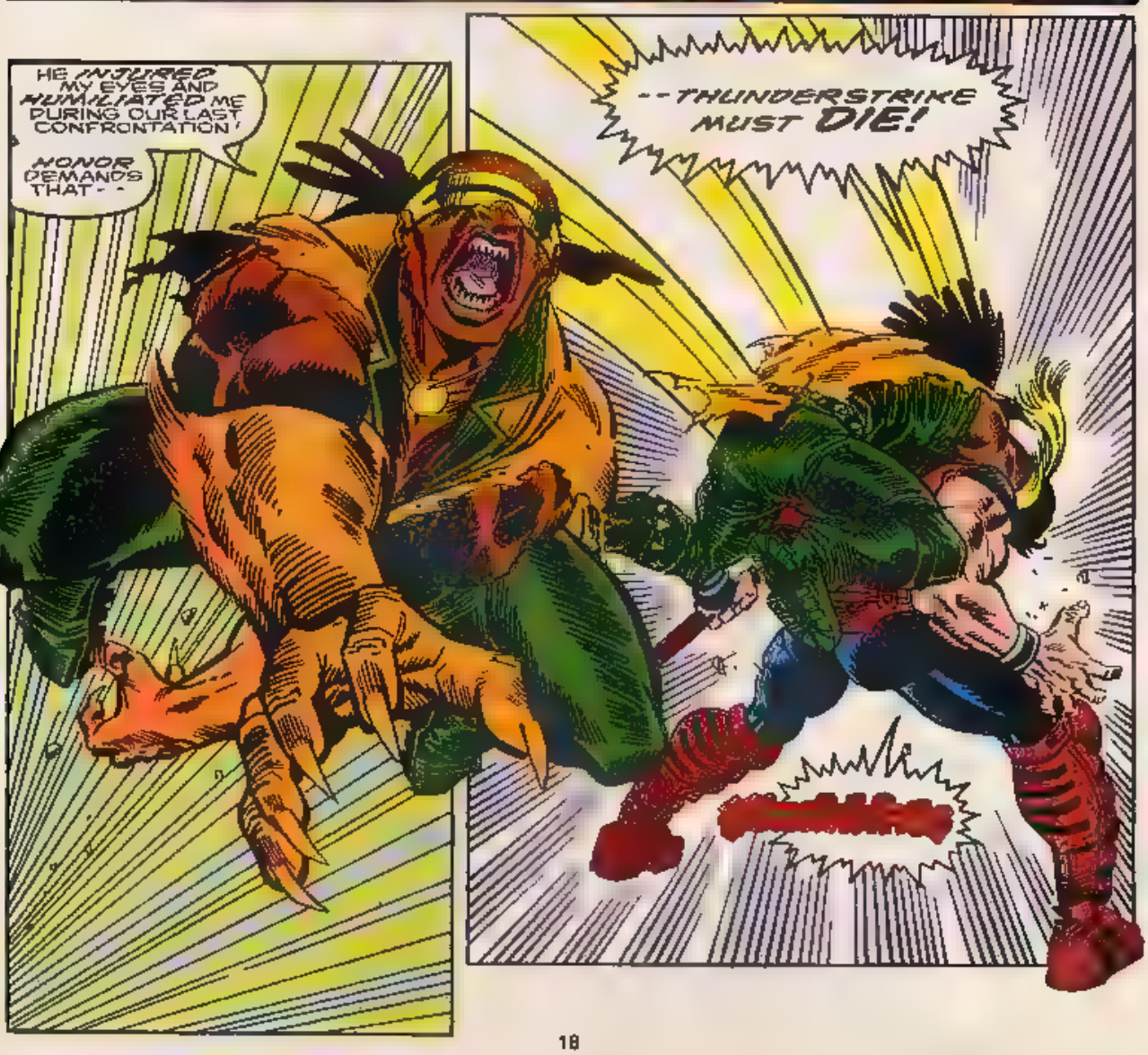
-- AND I REGAINED THE POWER OF BLOODAXE!


RELEASE THAT MAN!
DO NOT HARM HIM!
SKWAK!
OH EWELL! IT'S THAT BLOODAXE CHARACTER THAT BETA WARNED US ABOUT!
I'D BETTER CALL BETA BEFORE THESE LUNATICS WRECK MY SITE!
OTHERS MAY FEAR YOUR POWER MONGOOSE BUT TO ME--YOU ARE LIKE WHEAT TO THE THRESHER!
TELL ME HOW I CAN FIND BETA! LEAD ME TO YOUR MASTER--
--OR YOUR LIFE IS FORFEIT!
OOOOO YOU'RE SO SCARY!
GIVE ME A BREAK BONEHEAD! YOU'RE NOT THE FIRST COSTUMED NO GOODER I'VE EVER FOUGHT! I KNOW THAT YOU'RE BLUFFING!
WRONG! I DON'T BLUFF
NOT WHEN YOUR DEATH WILL CERTAINLY SERVE TO CONVINCE QUICKSAND TO TALK!
KLONNG!


THUNDERSTRIKE--!
STAY BACK! YOU MUSTN'T INTERFERE
I WAS ABOUT TO FORCE SETH'S UNDERLINGS TO REVEAL HIS LOCATION!
BY RESORTING TO TORTURE AND MURDER?!
NO! KILLING ISN'T THE WAY TO GO!
WHY NOT? HOW MANY TIMES HAS MONGOOSE ESCAPED YOU- ONLY TO RETURN? I CAN PUT AN END TO THIS VICIOUS CYCLE!
YOU CAN'T LET THE AXE CONTROL YOU, BLOODAXE! DROP IT! WALK AWAY!
YOU NAIVE FOOL! IF SETH IS THE IMMORTAL HE CLAIMS TO BE, HE WILL NOT STOP UNTIL HE HAS EXTERMINATED THE ENTIRE HUMAN RACE!
HE MUST BE STOPPED! IF NOT BY ME... THEN, WHO?!
IF NOT NOW, WHEN?!
WHOEVER YOU ARE BENEATH THAT MASK NO ONE IS ASKING YOU TO SACRIFICE YOURSELF!
I WAS GIVEN THE POWER OF THUNDERSTRIKE FOR A REASON!
MAYBE IT WAS TO STOP SETH! MAYBE IT WAS TO DESTROY THAT HATEFUL AXE!
ALL I KNOW FOR SURE IS THAT...
--THIS MADNESS STOPS TODAY!


OUR MISSION IS BLOWN, MONGOOSE!
LET'S HIT THE STAGE'S WHILE SKULLHEAD AND THE BOY BLUNDER PLAY DUMB AND DUMBER!
NO! I CAN'T LEAVE NOW
I CAN'T RUN FROM THUNDERSTRIKE


ARE YOU NUTS!
GO! SAVE YOURSELF! I DO NOT EXPECT YOU TO UNDERSTAND BUT I MUST CONFRONT THUNDERSTRIKE!
THIS PLACE WILL SOON BE SWARMING WITH COPS!

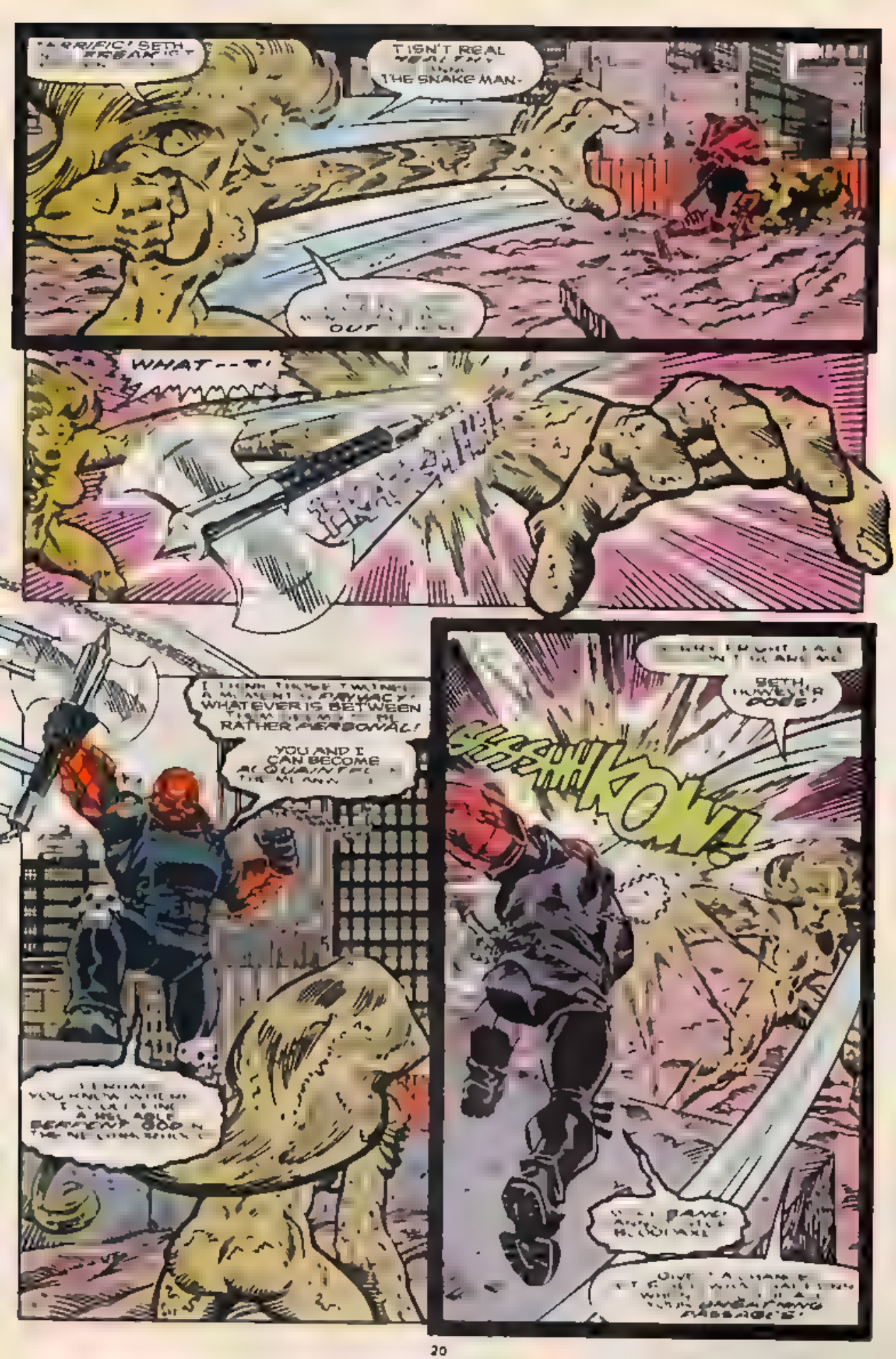

HE INJURED MY EYES AND HUMILIATED ME DURING OUR LAST CONFRONTATION!
HONOR DEMANDS THAT--
--THUNDERSTRIKE MUST DIE!

IT MUST BE MONGOOSE WHO SPILLS YOUR BLOOD!
MONGOOSE WHO ENDS YOUR LIFE
MONGOOSE WHO USHERS YOU INTO OBLIVION!
TAKE A NUMBER, PAL! CAN'T YOU SEE I'M ALREADY SERVING ANOTHER CUSTOMER?

MAYBE BLOODAXE IS RIGHT ABOUT YOU, MONGOOSE
MAYBE YOU'VE RETURNED ONCE TOO OFTEN.
I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR YOU NOW!
YOU'RE ONLY IN MY WAY!

THOP!
AND WHEN SOMETHING'S IN MY WAY -

-E MOVE IT!
KPOOM!

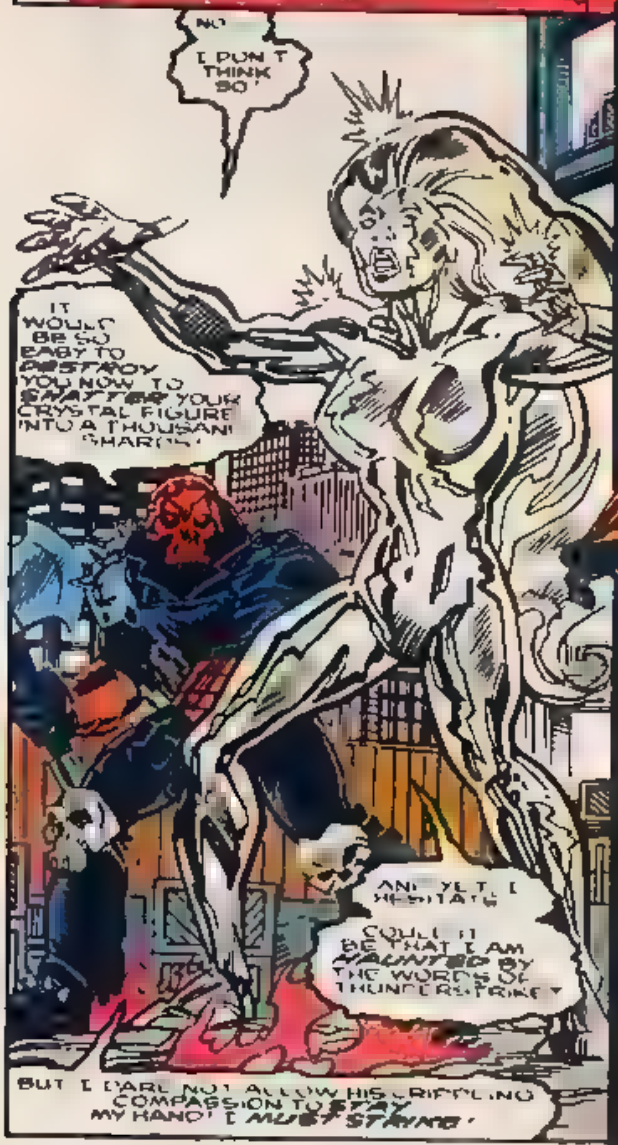

TERRIFIC! SETH BREAKS IT
IT'S NOT REAL
THE SNAKE MAN-
WHAT--?!
I THINK THESE TWAINS A MOMENT OF PRIVACY WHATEVER IS BETWEEN US IS RATHER PERSONAL!
YOU AND I CAN BECOME ACQUAINTED
YOU KNOW WHEN I TALK LIKE A HELPLESS BEAUTIFUL GOD
SETH, HOWEVER GOOD!
SHRINK-KOW!
BLAM! AND WITH BLOOD MAKE
GIVE ME A CHANCE TO FIGURE WHAT THAT WAS WHEN YOUR OVERLAPPING PASSAGES!

MEANWHILE, SOMEWHERE ACROSS TOWN
RIGGER LOOK OUT!
THE THERMAL MAN IS TARGETING YOU!
DON'T WORRY! I'LL SAVE YOU!
OH, MAD DOG--! YOU'RE SO BIG AND STRONG!
YES! YES! AND PLEASE DON'T FORGET COURAGEOUS AND HANDSOME!
HOW COULD I? HOW COULD ANY HOT BLOODED WOMAN?!
C'MERE, YOU HARD HUNK OF LAW ENFORCEMENT! LET'S BREAK OUT THE HANDCUFFS, AND
EXCUSE ME--?!
MAD DOG, YOU ARE ONE DISGUSTING PERVERT!
IT'S BAD ENOUGH THE BRASS LICENSED CODE BLUE... DON'T MAKE MATTERS WORSE WITH YOUR JUVENILE FANTASIES!
JEEZ, RIGGER, SOME WOMEN MIGHT BE FLATTERED!
REALLY?! WELL, THIS WOMAN WILL FLATTEN YOU IF--
HEADS UP, TEAM! WE'RE ON THE MOVE!
WAH-HOO!
I'LL FEEL SO MUCH SAFER WHEN I ONLY HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT BEING KILLED BY THE PERPS!
WHAT'S THE JOB, SIR?
'STRIKE AND BLOODAXE ARE MIXING IT UP WITH MONGOOSE AND QUICKSAND
FOR THE VERY LAST TIME!
WE READ YOU LOUD AND CLEAR, LIEUTENANT STONE!

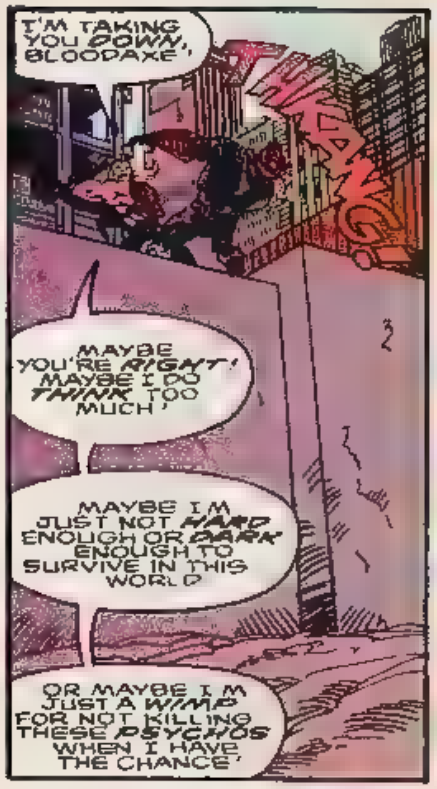
THUNDERSTRIKE! OF ALL I HAVE EVER FOUGHT I HATE YOU MOST OF ALL!
YOU COULD HAVE KILLED ME DURING OUR LAST BATTLE BUT YOU LACKED THE NECESSARY COURAGE!
YOUR SPINELESS MERCY DISGRACED ME BEFORE MY MASTER! DISHONORED ME AS A WARRIOR
LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT, HAIRBALL...
YOU ALMOST BUTCHERED ME THE LAST TIME WE MET...
KRAK!
AND NOW YOU WANT TO RIP MY NECK OUT BECAUSE I HAD THE ENORMOUS GALL TO SPARE YOUR LIFE?!
BUDDY, ARE YOU A CASE!!
THKOW!

I STAND CORRECTED QUICKSAND!
FFWOOSH!
YOUR SAND-LIKE BODY IS A MOST IMPRESSIVE WEAPON!
BUT IT WILL ALSO PROVE YOUR UNDOING!
WHA-- WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

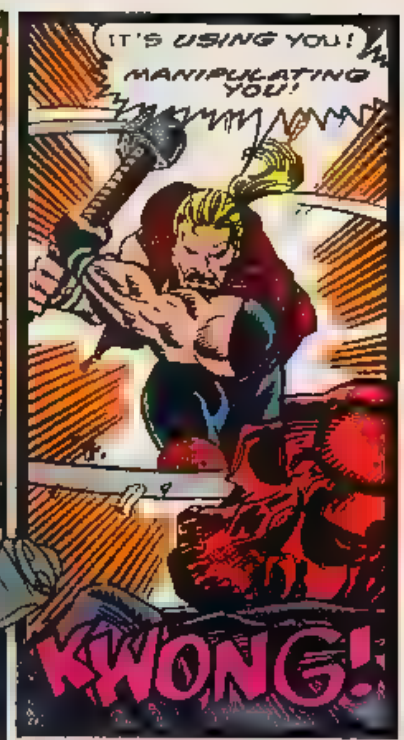
SIMPLY STATED, I AM EMPLOYING MY ENCHANTED BATTLEAXE TO TURN UP THE HEAT ON YOU!
NOOOOO!
YOU CAN'T! YOU MUSTN'T!
I'LL KILL YOU!


NO!
I DON'T THINK SO!
IT WOULD BE SO EASY TO DESTROY YOU NOW TO SHATTER YOUR CRYSTAL FIGURE INTO A THOUSAND SHARDS!
AND YET, I HESITATE!
COULD IT BE THAT I AM HAUNTED BY THE WORDS OF THUNDERSTRIKE?
BUT I DARE NOT ALLOW HIS CRIPPLING COMPASSION TO STAY MY HAND! I MUST STRIKE!

NO!
NO MORE KILLING!
NO MORE DEATH!
NO MORE!


I'M TAKING YOU DOWN, BLOODAXE!
KANG!
MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT! MAYBE I DO THINK TOO MUCH!
MAYBE I'M JUST NOT HARD ENOUGH OR DARK ENOUGH TO SURVIVE IN THIS WORLD
OR MAYBE I'M JUST A WIMP FOR NOT KILLING THESE PSYCHOS WHEN I HAVE THE CHANCE!

THWUP!
BUT THAT DOESN'T CHANGE THE FACT THAT YOUR AXE IS EVIL!


IT'S USING YOU! MANIPULATING YOU!
KWONG!

BUT NOT ANYMORE!
KWU-TUDD
THIS IS IT! YOU'VE BEEN SEPARATED FROM YOUR AXE FOR ALMOST SIXTY SECONDS!
YOU'RE GOING TO CHANGE! TRANSFORM BACK INTO YOUR HUMAN FORM

--AND I'M FINALLY GOING TO SEE YOUR REAL IDENTITY!

GOOD LORD-- NO!
IT CAN'T BE--!
PWUD!

BLOODAXE IS... JACKIE LUKUS!?!

I... I'M SO SORRY, ERIC! I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO FIND OUT THIS WAY!

I SHOULD HAVE LISTENED TO STELLARIS! SHOULD HAVE TOLD YOU THE TRUTH!

STELLARIS KNEW--?!

SHE RECOGNIZED ME AT THE HEALTH CLUB! IN THE LOCKER ROOM WHERE I STORED THE AXE!

BACK OFF, HERO! YOU ALREADY DONE ENOUGH HARM!

I'M A DOCTOR, AND THIS WOMAN NEEDS MEDICAL ATTENTION!

THE PARAMEDICS ARE RIGHT BEHIND US, DOC!

WE'VE ALREADY BAGGED QUICKSAND AND MONGOOSE, STRIKE--BUT WHERE'S BLOODAXE?!

"BLOODAXE" IS RIGHT HERE, OFFICER!

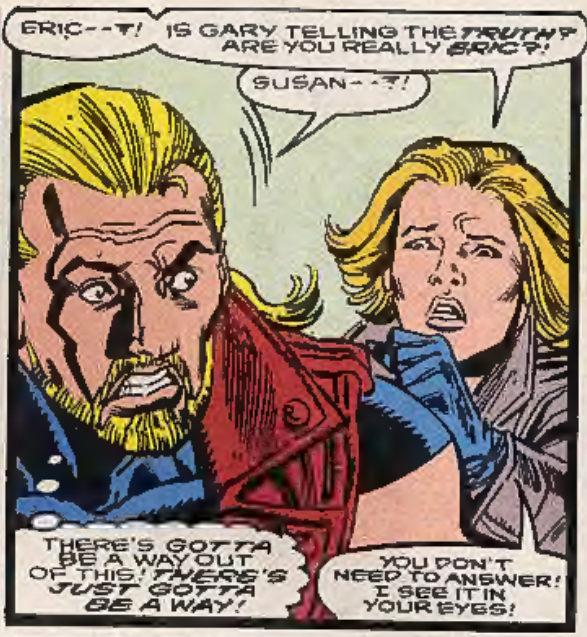
SHE WAS INJURED BY HER FALL, BUT I THINK SHE'LL BE ALL RIGHT.

AS NEAR AS I CAN TELL, MS. LUKUS IS A VICTIM!

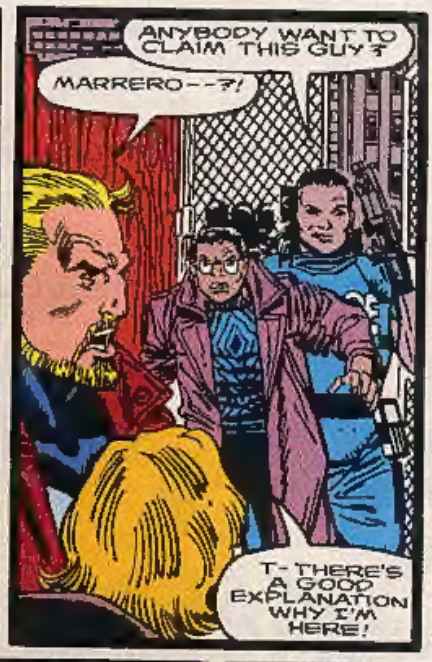
I'VE BEEN SECRETLY FOLLOWING HER EVER SINCE I ATTENDED A PARTY AT THE HOME OF ERIC MASTERSON!

I SAW HER FIND THIS WEIRD AXE IN HIS CLOSET, AND SHE TRANSFORMED INTO BLOODAXE!

LATER THE SAME NIGHT I SAW ERIC MASTERSON CHANGE INTO THUNDERSTRIKE!
POLICE
POLICE

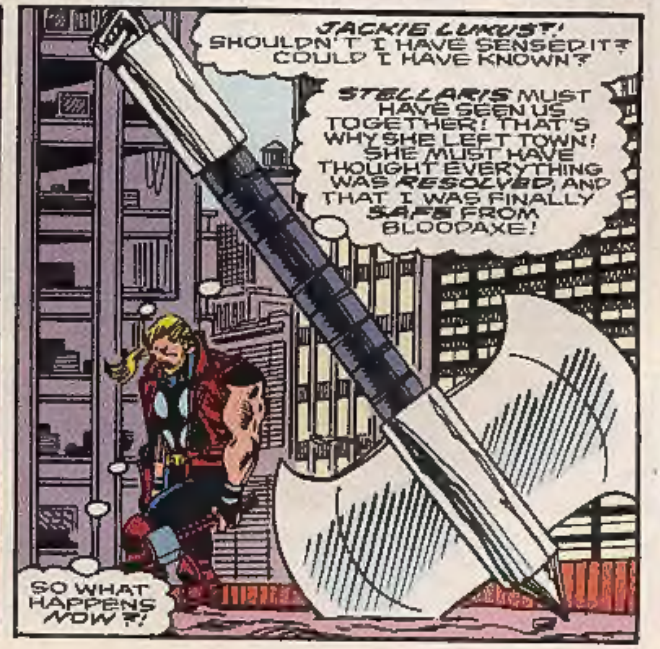

ERIC--?! IS GARY TELLING THE TRUTH? ARE YOU REALLY ERIC?!
SUSAN--?!
THERE'S GOTTA BE A WAY OUT OF THIS! THERE'S JUST GOTTA BE A WAY!
YOU DON'T NEED TO ANSWER! I SEE IT IN YOUR EYES!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, SUZIE?
GARY'S BEEN ACTING SO STRANGE LATELY... ASKING ALL ABOUT YOU AND JACKIE... I JUST HAD TO LEARN WHY!


ANYBODY WANT TO CLAIM THIS GUY?
MARRERO--?!
T-THERE'S A GOOD EXPLANATION WHY I'M HERE!

I WAS... CONCERNED FOR SUSAN! I COULD SEE THAT PARETSKY WAS PULLING HER INTO SOMETHING WEIRD, AND I JUST WANTED TO PROTECT HER!
ISN'T THAT WHAT YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO DO, HERO?!

THAT'S ENOUGH! WE'LL TAKE STATEMENTS FROM EVERYONE WHEN WE GET DOWNTOWN.
THERE ARE STILL BAD GUYS TO CATCH.
POLICE
POLICE
AMBULANCE


JACKIE LUKUST! SHOULDN'T I HAVE SENSED IT? COULD I HAVE KNOWN?
STELLARIS MUST HAVE SEEN US TOGETHER! THAT'S WHY SHE LEFT TOWN! SHE MUST HAVE THOUGHT EVERYTHING WAS RESOLVED, AND THAT I WAS FINALLY SAFE FROM BLOODAXE!
SO WHAT HAPPENS NOW?!

"THERE ARE STILL BAD GUYS TO CATCH!"
"ISN'T THAT WHAT YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO DO, HERO?"
"YOU NAIVE FOOL! IF SETH IS THE IMMORTAL HE CLAIMS TO BE--"
"--HE WILL NOT STOP UNTIL HE HAS EXTERMINATED THE ENTIRE HUMAN RACE!
"THE ENTIRE HUMAN RACE!"
"HE MUST BE STOPPED!"
"IF NOT BY ME... THEN, WHO?"
"IF NOT NOW... WHEN?!"
"NO ONE IS ASKING YOU TO SACRIFICE YOURSELF!"
"IF NOT BY ME... THEN, WHO?"
"WHO?"
THA-KOOM!
"WHO?"
"WHO?"
SSSSMOKIN'!
SETH! THUNDERSTRIKE IS COMING FOR YOU!
WATCH YOUR BACK, SNAKE MAN!
ONLY ONE OF US WILL WALK AWAY FROM THIS BATTLE!
NEXT: THE AVENGERS! THOR! AND A SHOCKING SHOWDOWN WITH SETH! BE HERE!

# THE THUNDER STRIKES!

c/o Marvel Comics 387 Park Ave South New York, NY 10016 (addresses withheld by request)
Ralph Macchio: Waste Matt Idelson: Asst. Waste

**Well, it's my sad duty to announce the impending conclusion to this title as of issue #24. Despite the high stan-dards of quality Tom, Ron, and Al have brought to this title for the better part of two years, we are just not going to be able to continue. What brought about this premature demise? Was it sales? The need to tighten the line? The constantly evolving marketplace? All of the above com-bined to bring about the silencing of the thunder just two short months from now. Rest assured, Tom and Ron are putting their all into the end-run of this book, wrapping up their saga of the "hero of the 90's" in shocking and ingenious manner. And as soon as that is over, they'll be chanelling their collective talents towards a very special one-shot about Odin's least-favorite son (and we don't mean Loki). So stay of good cheer, for the magic will continue!**

**–Ralph**

Dear Thunderstrikers:

Re: Issue #18.

Alright, so my past attempts to garner a no-prize weren't successful (just be glad I didn't point out the other, more obvious and difficult to explain away gaffes). Anyway, at the end of THUN-DERSTRIKE #17, we see Seth picking up the skull cap of Bloodaxe. At the be-ginning of THUNDERSTRIKE #18, Blood-axe is wearing his red skull again. The only possible explanation I can come up with for this is that Seth really isn't such a bad guy after all, and gave the helsted headgear back to its owner. (Alright, so that was a lame excuse. Can you think of a better one?)

As for who Bloodaxe is, here's my theory. It's the one person who has been considered above reproach--the very last person you would think is Bloodaxe. Yes, Kevin Masterson is Bloodaxe!

Well, to the final point. Please add my name to the ever-growing list of people demanding that Stellaris pinup (how about her in a bikini?). I also sug-gest a limited series for this wonderful char-acter whose potential has barely been tapped.

Well, until Volstagg goes on the Ultra Slim-Fast diet, make mine Marvel!

Chris Nemec
(Address withheld by request)

**"Helsted Headgear?" Who do you think you are, Chris--Tom DeFalco, the master of alliteration? Seriously though, Seth returned Jackie's (uh, Bloodaxe's) headgear because he saw the aforementioned Ms. Axe as an unwilling agent in his long-term future schemes for global domination via mass extermination (how's that for a mouthful?). Obviously, a Bloodaxe without his helmet would be about as useful as Ralph without his chair. Satisfied?**

**As for Kevin as Bloodaxe–wow! No wonder Eric was so ready to say goodbye to Bobby Steele and com-pany this issue!**

Dear Marvel,

I just had to write to say thanks. I live in New Zealand, so I don't know when this will get there or even if it will be printed, but I hope it does. I've enjoyed reading THUNDERSTRIKE since #1, and I've enjoyed every last minute of it. The artwork and coloring are brilliant, and the story just keeps getting better and better.

Before I read THUNDERSTRIKE #1, I wasn't even sure who he was, but as I read, I grew more and more interested. (You could say I was Thunderstruck.) I feel I am learning to know Eric Masterson as himself and as Thunderstrike just as he is learning about the trials of being a hero and discovering his new powers and limitations.

Tom and Ron's approach to these subjects is realistic but not too serious to make it boring, as well as the fact that it's jam-packed full of action and excitement.

Over all, THUNDERSTRIKE is a well-balanced and brilliant comic, and I look forward to reading future issues. Well, gotta go now, so, until Thunder-strike gets a haircut, make mine Marvel.

James Childs
50 Truman Road
Christchurch 8005
New Zealand

Dear Keepers of the Mace-Wielding One,

Thank you! I could talk about this being my first effort at talking to you, or about the fact that I have been an avid fan of Masterson since his introduction into the world of Beddie-Bashing, but no. Neither of these is as important as the fact that your book is one of Marvel's finest. I only read a few titles, but yours is most definitely one of them (and shall remain so for a long time)! Well done, Tom and Ron!

Well, praising done, a sprinkling of questions and suggestions:

1) First, everybody has a theory, so, is Bloodaxe that nice Mr. Marrero?

2) Will we be seeing more Asgard-class evildoers?

3) Is Sangré going to be back? If she is, will Frank Castle come too?

4) Give Eric back his bandanna and goggles that he wore in issue #6. I know the goggles were probably infra-red or something, and belonged to Code: Blue, but they were cool!

5) Lo! Shall there be another gathering? Please?

6) Give Stone's boys a book of their own. They are too popular to share.

7) Do you guys have Stellaris's phone number?

Well, adios for now, and, until Heimdall goes blind, make mine Marvel!

Graham Boag
41 Lochiea Rd.
Newlands, Glasgow
Scotland

**Ah, praise. How we love it so. Awwwww, questions. How they tax us so.**

**1) If Bloodaxe was Mr. Marrero, would he really be so nice?**

**2) Yes! No. Well, sort of. Now that Eric's been possessed by the Bloodaxe, you can bet your flagon of mead there will be an Asgardian response–of the blond persuasion!**

**3) No, and no (and two wrongs don't make a right!).**

**4) The goggles actually belong-ed to S.H.I.E.L.D., but Eric's seeing nothing but red these days, so he probably wouldn't need them anyway. As for that bandanna, Eric briefly considered going back to that look, but the lawsuit from Aunt Jemima squelched that idea.**

**5) Verily, yea! See answer 2 (if that's what you're asking).**

**6) Sorry, but there's no immediate plans for an ongoing CODE:BLUE series, though we hope their appearance this issue sated your appetite a little.**

**7) If we did, do you really think we'd just give it out? Think $$!**

Dear Ralph and Matt,

THUNDERSTRIKE #18 was one heck of a bang-up slug-fest. Seeing She-Hulk in the book was a whole lot of fun. I really like the way she interacts with Eric (at least in his Thunderstrike guise), and I hope you'll bring her back into the book before too long.

I'm always a fan of good continuity, but I enjoy it even more when a writer or writer/artist team develop their own special sense of continuity. Titania's fear of/need for revenge on She-Hulk dates all the way back to SECRET WARS, but it was Tom and Ron who really developed the ongoing "Shulkeis" of Titania in AMAZING SPIDER-MAN a bunch of years ago. To see it resurfacing here was nothing short of brilliant, and it added a level of texture to the story which made Shulkie more than just additional muscle for beating down the bad guys. Good job by all, and as usual, I enjoyed Eric's role in the story as well.

Dan Allenson
27 Bristol Drive
St. Louis, MO 63130

**Glad you enjoyed Tom and Ron's nod to the past, Dan, although they certainly never intended for Shulkie to become the focus of the story. Guess you must be a big She-Hulk fan, eh?**

**NEXT:**

**Bloodaxe is gone! Long live...Blood-axe? Eric's absorbed the enchant-ment of the axe as he prepares for the winner-take-all, no-holds-barred, this-is-the-big-one-True-Believer battle with Seth. But can even he resist the temptation of evil that conquers all who possess the axe? No problem! Right? Uh, Tom? Ron? Al? We're right, aren't we...?**